THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF FORMING CORPORATE STANDARDS OF SERVICE QUALITY IN AN INTERNATIONAL HOTEL CHAIN

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У статті досліджено теоретичні основи формування корпоративних стандартів якості обслуговування в міжнародних готельних мережах. Визначено важливість стандартизації, сертифікації та управління якістю для забезпечення стабільності обслуговування та задоволеності клієнтів. У дослідженні проаналізовано класичні підходи, такі як SERVQUAL, TQM та PDCA, а також сучасні інновації, включаючи цифровізацію, практики сталого розвитку та бенчмаркінг. Як приклад впровадження корпоративних стандартів на практиці розглянуто досвід провідних світових готельних брендів (Hilton, Marriott, Accor, InterContinental Hotels Group).

Ключові слова: *якість обслуговування, корпоративні стандарти, готельна мережа, SERVQUAL, стандартизація, бенчмаркінг, інновації, індустрія гостинності.*

The article presents the theoretical foundations of forming corporate standards of service quality in international hotel chains. It highlights the importance of standardization, certification, and quality management in ensuring consistency of service and customer satisfaction. The study analyzes classical approaches such as SERVQUAL, TQM, and PDCA, as well as modern innovations including digitalization, sustainability practices, and benchmarking. The experience of leading global hotel brands (Hilton, Marriott, Accor, InterContinental Hotels Group) is reviewed as an example of implementing corporate standards into practice.

Keywords: *service quality, corporate standards, hotel chain, SERVQUAL, standardization, benchmarking, innovation, hospitality industry.*

The relevance of the topic. The hospitality industry is one of the most dynamic yet vulnerable sectors of the global economy. It directly depends on fluctuations in tourist flows, international markets, and consumer preferences. In this context, service quality becomes a decisive factor in competitiveness and guest loyalty. Service quality is defined by the customer's perception of how well a hotel's services meet or exceed their expectations.

International hotel chains face a particular challenge: to maintain uniform service quality across multiple cultural, economic, and regulatory environments. Corporate service standards play a key role in this process, guaranteeing consistency and creating a strong brand image. With increasing competition, customer expectations, and digital transformation, research into the theoretical basis of forming service standards is especially relevant.

The purpose of the article is to provide a theoretical analysis of the foundations of forming corporate standards of service quality in international hotel chains and to identify the main tools for their improvement and adaptation to current challenges.

Results of the study. In the scientific discourse on service quality in hospitality, the contributions of A. Parasuraman, V. Zeithaml, L. Berry (SERVQUAL model), W. Deming (TQM), and other researchers are fundamental. Their works emphasize systematic management of service quality through standardization, measurement, and continuous improvement. At the same time,

Ukrainian scholars such as L. Zavidna and N. Ivanchenko also develop methodologies for applying quality standards in domestic hotel business (table 1).

The theory is rooted in the "gap model" of service quality, most notably represented by the SERVQUAL framework developed by Parasuraman et al. SERVQUAL identifies five core dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. These dimensions serve as the backbone for most service quality assessments in the international hotel industry. The gap between expected service and perceived service is the primary determinant of customer satisfaction, cementing the need for standardized corporate service quality protocols.

Theoretical Models Informing Standards are presented with several academic frameworks underpin the development of service quality standards:

The SERVQUAL model emphasizes both objective and subjective measures through customer surveys to assess standards across five dimensions.

The performance-only SERVPERF model focuses purely on delivered service, offering a streamlined approach for internal evaluation.

Total Quality Management (TQM) is another theoretical approach, advocating for continuous improvement, employee empowerment, and leadership-driven quality culture within hotel chains.

These theories collectively highlight the importance of a systematic approach to crafting, implementing, and maintaining service quality standards at the corporate level.

The Role of Corporate Standardization

Corporate standards in global hotel chains create a unified brand identity and ensure that guests experience consistent service quality regardless of location. Standardization helps maintain operational efficiency, regulatory compliance, and brand reputation. Key theoretical drivers for standardization include institutional theory (emphasizing legitimacy across markets) and contingency theory (adapting standards to local contexts while maintaining core brand principles).

Table 1

Theoretical models for forming corporate service quality standards in hospitality

Model / Tool	Sustainability programs
SERVQUAL	Measures service quality via 5 dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy. Forms the basis for corporate guest service standards.
TQM (Total Quality Management)	Comprehensive management approach involving all employees in the process of improving service quality. Widely used in Hilton and Marriott.
PDCA cycle (Deming)	Plan–Do–Check–Act methodology for continuous improvement of processes. Applied in service audits and guest feedback analysis.
ISO 9001, HACCP	International certification systems ensuring compliance with global safety and quality requirements
Benchmarking	Systematic comparison of service standards with competitors such as Hyatt, Accor, and IHG to adopt best practices.
Digital innovations	Mobile check-in, smart rooms, CRM feedback systems enabling real-time quality monitoring.
Sustainability programs	Integration of ecological and social standards (e.g., Accor's *Planet 21*, Marriott's *Serve 360*).

Influences Shaping Quality Standards. There are several influences affect the formation of service quality standards:

- External brand standards from organizations like Forbes, LHW, LQA, and ISO provide benchmarks for luxury, cleanliness, professionalism, and sustainability.

- Customer feedback and benchmarking against competitors are integral, with mystery guest audits and real-time ratings serving as validation tools for maintaining desired quality levels.

- Managerial strategies, such as staff training, empowerment, and digitalization of service processes, further reinforce the theoretical commitment to quality assurance.

Components of Service Quality Standards and standardized service quality in international hotel chains comprises several interlocking elements:

- Design and physical features (tangibles): This includes architecture, décor, amenities, and uniform appearance.

- Service delivery: Reliability, responsiveness, and empathy are embedded through scripted procedures, checklists, and staff conduct guidelines.

- Technology integration: Modern hotels utilize digital platforms for reservations, feedback collection, and service personalization, ensuring consistency and efficiency.

- Loyalty programs and customer relationship management protocols: These provide measurable ways to evaluate and enhance the guest experience.

Implementation Strategies. To successfully implement service quality standards, hotels must undertake a structured approach:

- Develop clear policies and SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) that reflect both theoretical recommendations and practical needs.

- Invest in staff training programs, digital tools (such as inspection apps), and feedback systems to reinforce standards daily.

- Regular audits and performance-based evaluations ensure compliance and foster a culture of continuous improvement.

International hotel chains operate in diverse markets, demanding adaptation without compromise to core standards. Theoretical approaches here involve balancing global best practices with local cultural nuance. For example, while certain standards–such as hygiene and safety–are universal, others, like customer interaction styles, must be calibrated to regional expectations. Global standards such as those recognized by the GSTC align service quality with sustainability and responsible tourism principles, further expanding the breadth of corporate standards.

Challenges and Future Directions include staff turnover, evolving technology, shifting guest preferences, and the complexity of adapting standards globally. Future theoretical advancements point towards greater personalization, data-driven service improvement, and flexible standard modules that can quickly respond to marketplace changes. Artificial intelligence, predictive analytics, and smart automation are at the forefront of the next generation of service quality frameworks, promising even higher consistency and personalization in service delivery.

The theoretical foundations of forming corporate standards of service quality in an international hotel chain encompass both conceptual models and practical frameworks that are critical in achieving consistent excellence across global operations. Key doctrines are drawn from established service quality theories, hospitality management literature, and globally recognized industry standards.

Conclusions. Corporate standards of service quality in international hotel chains are formed on the basis of standardization, quality management, certification, benchmarking, and innovation. They ensure consistent service delivery, strengthen competitiveness, and build customer trust.

Future development of these standards must integrate digital transformation and sustainable development principles, while adapting to cultural diversity and changing consumer expectations. The theoretical foundations of forming corporate standards of service quality in an international hotel chain are rooted in classical and contemporary management theories, validated by industry best practices. These standards are essential for brand integrity, customer satisfaction, and competitive advantage in the global hospitality landscape. Through frameworks like SERVQUAL,

TQM, and GSTC guidelines, the industry continues to evolve towards more sophisticated and responsive models for quality assurance and customer care.

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BRANDING OF INTERNATIONAL HOTEL CHAINS

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Брендинг виступає ключовим механізмом координації, за допомогою якого міжнародні готельні мережі формують, забезпечують та підкріплюють цінність на всіх етапах взаємодії зі споживачем – від етапу пошуку інформації та процесу бронювання до безпосереднього перебування у готелі та постперебувальних вражень. У контексті надання послуг, що характеризуються нематеріальністю, нерозривністю процесу виробництва й споживання, варіативністю та швидкопсувністю, брендовий капітал, заснований на сприйнятті клієнта (Customer-Based Brand Equity, CBBE), інтегрує рівень обізнаності, асоціації, сприйняту якість, довіру та лояльність у практичні управлінські орієнтири. У статті систематизовано сучасні наукові підходи до дослідження CBBE, архітектури